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THE SISTERS
OR
CHARACTER
EXEMPLIFIED

48.1697.





THE SISTERS;
OR,
CHARACTER EXEMPLIFIED.

A Simple Tale.

**"IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE IN DISHONESTY
AND FALSEHOOD, WITHOUT FALLING INTO PERPLEXITY
AND DISTRESS."**

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.
1848.

P R E F A C E .

To those who may condescend to peruse this little Tale, the Writer begs respectfully to state, that she composed it chiefly with the view to beguile the tedium, and banish the *ennui* of hours, which might otherwise have been spent in sadness, occasioned by the death of some dear relatives, and by her removal from the society of other valued friends and associates.

It would, in all probability, never have appeared in its present form, had not the Authoress been requested, by many kind friends and well-wishers, to submit to its publication.

She is fully sensible of its many defects,—but, being the first effort of her pen, humbly craves for it a share of the candour and patronage of the public.

Ipswich, 1848.

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VI

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THE SISTERS ;

OR,

CHARACTER EXEMPLIFIED.

Elder Sister. Well ! at length I believe all things are tolerably arranged for the reception of the Nabob, our rich old uncle, and we may now hourly expect him ; for according to his letter, " Liverpool will possess no charms to detain him from his *beloved* nieces any longer than rest requires, after he has once safely landed on Old England's shores." Ha ! ha ! ha ! the Old Boy might have remained still in Calcutta (or wherever he has been staying for the last twenty years,) without troubling his head about "his dear nieces" at Worthy Hall, did not his one hundred thousand pounds possess so many charms.

Younger Sister. True sister, true—or at the bottom of the sea, to become food for its finny inhabitants, had his wealth been safely

deposited in Lubbock & Co.'s banking house, payable to *our* order—but, as it is, we must prepare, to meet the old gentleman, with becoming affection,—press his residing with us,—pay him every attention,—wish him a continuance of long life; and yet pray most devoutly, that he may soon be esconced, beneath the family vault. Ha! ha! ha!

Elder Sister. Yes, once *there*, I would willingly cry “Peace to his shade.” But as you say, we must meet the old man, with all necessary respect, and maiden modesty. I should think from the difference of climate he has experienced, it is not probable he will live many years, and, as his nearest kindred, I see but one difficulty in the way of our possessing the whole of his wealth,—yet I cannot help confessing, this one obstacle, makes me feel any thing but comfortable, about the matter.

Younger Sister. You surprise me!—What can have possessed you to suppose that our Uncle will not act up to the seeming intention of his letter?—wherein he says, “that he comes home to divide his honest, but hard-earned wealth, amongst those dear children of his departed Brother, who are now to him the only beings he has to love, and who shall be as children unto him.”

Elder Sister. Our Uncle you must recollect is one of the old school,—what is termed, a straight-forward, honest man. One who would think it his duty to hang a man at the yard arm, (had he the power,) who dared tell him a direct falsehood ;—therefore, on this very ground, I dread a confabulation with him ; for, depend on it, he will want to know the beginning, middle, and end of every thing, and the attempt to deceive him, would be the forfeiture of his favours.

Younger Sister. But we can surely preserve our apparent regard for him within due bounds ; so, as neither to be thought overstraining in our affection, or remiss in the observance of it.

Elder Sister. I see you do not comprehend me, sister. Think you that after the lapse of so many years from his native country, he will not be inquiring into the minutest details, of our family history ? And after acquainting him, with the demise of our parents, will he not ask, “Had you not another sister ?” Do you imagine, he has entirely forgotten his pet God-child ?—the one, he used to take upon his knee, and teach to lisp, the name of Uncle.” Do you not remember, how pleased he used to look, when, instead of being able to articulate the word

"Uncle," she used to call him her dear, dear "Nunky?" Do you not also recollect, how frequently he took her with him in his walks,—how he gathered for her the wild flowers, and filled her basket with them,—and how delighted he seemed with her innocent prattle? Think you then, he has forgotten *her*, who on parting from, he *blessed* so fervently, and declared, that the fondest wish of his heart, was to be spared to see her grow up into the perfect being, his fond imagination had painted she would become? No! no! sister: I dare not flatter myself with such hopes,—he will, most assuredly, ask for her! and then what must be our reply?" Should we pronounce her to be dead, he would immediately seek the cold, the silent records of mortality, to gaze upon her resting place.—Were we to say she had emigrated to a foreign land, his penetration would in time discover the deception.—Or should we declare her frail, and base, he would seek out every den of iniquity, in order, if possible, to restore the supposed lost one.

Younger Sister. You have, certainly, awakened my apprehension, Sister; and I plainly perceive, we have some little cause to fear, that he may do as you have hinted; but, should he do so, we must tell him (and you

know this will in a great measure be true,) that our Father ere his death renounced her, on account of her bad conduct; and that in accordance with the will of our parent, we were compelled to separate from her. With the old man's antiquated notions of honour, I think he will scarcely give himself the trouble of further inquiry respecting her. We must endeavour to prevent his seeking her out, and by our own behaviour secure him firmly to ourselves.

Elder Sister. I cannot exactly say that I think he will be inclined to give her up so easily as you imagine; however, we must prepare for a bold stroke, and play our cards as well as we can; and the issue will soon be known, (looking out of the window,) for behold! he comes!! (She continues to speak ironically,) Dear, respectable old gentleman, I wish your money was in my keeping, and your precious self at peace with your ancestors!—

(But mum.)

Elder Sister (taking him by the hand). Welcome! welcome! again my dear revered Uncle to the land of your birth! This is indeed a proud,—a happy moment to your niece! I can almost fancy that the grave has opened and delivered up its dead, to have

thus once more restored to me *one* whom I fondly hail as second Father.

Younger Sister (takes his other hand). Fervently, dearest Uncle, accept from me also the repetition of my sister's welcome! Would that my tongue could give full utterance to my heart's feelings! Bless'd hour! that thus restores to us a relation so honoured!

Uncle. Beloved nieces! dearest children! this is indeed happiness! Tender branches of my departed brother,—this is too much joy. It leaves your poor old Uncle, almost without speech or utterance. Truly, this is a happy meeting for the returned wanderer, after so many perils,—so many hardships,—old and weather-beaten, to return home, and be thus received by two of nature's sweetest, purest flowers! is happiness indeed. Happy soil, that gave me birth, how do I hallow thee! With what transport do I again tread on thee,—with what gladness do I again breathe thy air, which infuses new life, and gives fresh vigour to this old frame! Oh, God! it is thou alone who hast thus bless'd me!—accept an old man's gratitude, and to thee be all the praise.

Eldest Sister. Come, dearest Uncle, you are too much excited and fatigued; let me take your hat,—and now I must insist on

seeing you to your own room,—after a little refreshment, and a night's rest, you will be able to talk to us more composedly.

Uncle. Dear children, do with me as ye will.

Elder Sister. So much for our meeting ; the old man has at length retired to rest ; I hope by to-morrow his ecstasies will be sobered down, or I shall hardly be able to keep pace with him, although I have been frequently told, that I am not tongue-tied.

Younger Sister. We must avoid speaking (if possible) on family matters. I think this will be the best plan to quiet his raptures. No enquiries after Emily as yet ;—he never even mentioned her name,—oh ! I've no doubt but he has forgotten her.

Elder Sister. Perhaps so,—to-morrow will decide the matter. I heartily pray his memory may prove treacherous. (Gives her Sister her arm.) Now let us retire,—but ere we sleep, we may as well take a peep at the present brought to us by our (coughing ironically) affectionate relative.

Younger Sister. I think we had better retire to rest ; to-morrow we can look at the presents, and I really feel quite drowsy.

Eldest Sister. Well, another day has broken favourably upon us,—really our Uncle's

rich presents shew him to be a man of generosity,—and from his selection of those beautiful Cashmere Shawls,—a man of taste too,—but mercy defend 'us! his constitution appears as good as his gifts; since last night's repose, he looks a strong, hale man.

Youngest Sister. Yes truly, the old man seems likely enough to bless us with his company for some time to come; heigho, I fear I shall soon grow weary of dancing attendance on the old beau! I see him at present in the garden, he has made quite a survey of the house and grounds. I suspect he thinks we have not forgotten to provide ourselves with some of the luxuries of life; but having lived so long in an eastern clime, I suppose these will hardly suit his taste; at all events we must endeavour to make him like them,—for to be compelled to give up any of our pleasures, or our habits, would indeed be paying dear, for the old man's wealth,—but I see him approaching.

Uncle. My dear Girls, I have been taking an early stroll through your beautiful domain and whilst I see you so comfortable, I cannot help blessing the memory of my poor brother, in leaving you so well provided for in the world.

Eldes Sister. Yes dear Uncle, we were

left a sufficiency certainly,—that is—if we live on it with prudence ; I believe our dear Father felt quite assured, that we should not squander it unnecessarily, or live beyond, what he was able to leave us.

Uncle. I have no doubt of your discretion my dear Nieces, and thank God, I have realized enough, to bestow on you, anything you may further require ; but in speaking of a Brother who was indeed dear to me,—in lamenting his death,—say have I also to deplore the death of another ? I perceive but two children left of the whole family circle ! What ! is my lovely, smiling playfellow,—my sweet Emily, also numbered with the dead ? Woes me if so, for I have never forgotten the beauteous bud,—she was a symbol of all that was lovely,—all that was innocent ! twenty years have fled, and yet it seems but as yesterday, since she used to sit upon my knee, and call me her dear, dear Nunky ! Oh ! tell not the old man, that the sweet flower perished in its bud, whilst this old trunk still “cumbereth the ground !”

Eldest Sister. Alas ! alas sir ! the Emily of your affection,—the fond pet of all our household, still lives ; would that we had followed her to her tomb, ere she entailed upon herself a Father’s displeasure, and brought the

flush of shame upon her Sisters cheeks! but dear Uncle, do not let us speak of her; we endeavour to forget her, as it is now a duty incumbent on us to do so.

Uncle (much agitated). I must speak of her. My poor, poor Emily! hast thou become a dishonour to thyself,—to thy name, and to thy sex! Oh impossible! it cannot be! thy Angel look was too pure! vileness could not have had power to efface so beautiful an impression, and leave its own degrading stamp behind! (to the Sisters) surely, surely you deceive yourselves and me!

Younger Sister. She has indeed dishonoured herself, and her family, but—but—

Uncle (hastily.) But what? Speak out, and speak honestly, I would know the worst.

Younger Sister, (trembling.) I was going to add dear Uncle,—but not in the dreadful light in which you appear to view it. Emily has disgraced herself,—disgraced us all, by marrying with one infinitely below her family in station, and the result has proved, what might have been expected; —alienation from her friends, and utter misery, and ruin to herself.

Uncle. Oh, Niece! what a load have you removed from my mind! my Emily then is still spotless!—Improper matches are not of

course what we should desire for those we love, but if the young man her husband bore an unblemished reputation,—why, there was nothing so very reprehensible after all, in your Sister's conduct. I mean, there was nothing but what her Father and friends could have conscientiously overlooked; of course your dear Father pardoned, and provided for her?

Eldest Sister. Oh no! I am sure dear Uncle, you do not expect that our Father would compromise the honor of all his family, for the sake of one of its members! only think! the fellow she married, was only an *Artist!* he was clever to be sure, or my Father would not have employed him to have given Emily lessons, for she painted with great taste, before she took lessons, As soon as my Father discovered that an attachment had sprung up between Emily and her master, he fell into a dreadful passion,—dismissed the young man, and confined my Sister for a long time, to her bed-room,—but she was eventually released, and the first return she made for her liberty, was to unite herself immediately by marriage to her lover. My Father instantly altered his will, and disinherited her, and he made us promise never to see, or do any thing for her.

Uncle, (sternly.) And did you bind yourselves in such an unholy,—such an unnatural, and unjust promise?

Eldest Sister. We never disobeyed our Father whilst he was living dear Uncle, and a promise is doubly sacred, after the exactor of the promise is no more.

Uncle (angry and agitated). My poor, poor Emily! thank God, thy old Uncle has made no promise to renounce thee! (to the elder Sister) but Madam, you know of course how, and where, she is situated, and what her Husband is doing just now?

Eldest Sister. Why—really—(*confused*) really,—it—appears they have changed their lodging so often—that it is some time since—since we heard any thing about them.

Uncle. Some time! How long?

Eldest Sister. Perhaps a year—or—or—more.

Uncle (taking up his hat and cane). Then it is indeed time, that some one should know where thou art, and how provided for, my poor, outcast, my dear Emily! (to the Sister) be pleased Madam, to favour me with the last address, you had to this unfortunate Sister.

Eldest Niece (*confused*). Really dear Uncle,—I do not exactly know where it is (seeing him striding about, greatly agitated)

pray be more composed, I have only mislaid it, and have no doubt I shall find it presently,—I will go and look for it.

Uncle. What a check have I received to my happiness! a little while ago, and I thought if felicity ever fell to the lot of one mortal, it had alighted on myself:—but all is unstable, uncertain, and fleeting in this life, and after all,—why,—all is vanity!

Niece returning. This dear Sir, is the last address we received from her; (seeing him going towards the door) but pray be not so agitated, whither would you go? Do not,—pray do not think of leaving us to-day, dear Uncle! we will send a servant, to make every enquiry you choose, and we will ride to Town to-morrow, if you deem it necessary, and endeavour to find her out.

Uncle (sternly). *Niece!* it is not only time for me think, but to act, especially when justice requires it: to remain longer here where affluence and comfort reign, is unnecessary, besides to know that an individual so dear to me as Emily is, may perhaps be lying on a bed of sorrow and sickness, would it not be unchristian,—nay would it not be cruelty in the extreme, to hesitate a moment to fly to her succour? *Niece!* I could not answer for such conduct to God, or

to my conscience. No, no,—no rest shall old George Worthy enjoy, until he has found out, and done justice to your Sister so cruelly, so heartlessly neglected.

Younger Sister. Here's a pretty piece of business; how impatient and headstrong, he is!

Elder Sister. I must say his conduct has not surprised me; we have now to devise some plan, to make the best of this bad matter,—let us retire, and meditate on something likely to soothe the old man's irritable disposition, by the time he returns.

Uncle going to a Lodging-house Keeper. Good day, Madam, I am informed you are in the habit of letting Lodgings.

Woman. Sir, you have been rightly informed,—I have let apartments for many years, ever since the death of my poor dear Husband, which melancholy and unfortunate event, (for me,) took place seventeen years since,—when having no property, save a little furniture, I took this house, and have managed with some economy, and a great deal of industry, to rub along the rough road of life tolerably easy.

Uncle. Good, good, I very much commend you,—but my visit to your house, is to be introduced to one of your Lodgers,—a person

of the name of Wiseman, who, with his family, are I am told residing here.

Woman. Oh dear Sir! the person you speak of, left me several months ago, and I do not know what has become of him. Ah! he was a nice gentleman! and his Lady, why, she was the most amiable, and the best tempered creature, that ever graced my humble home; she was a christian Sir, if ever there was one: oh dear! how she struggled with adversity! yet she never complained; and though pinched with hunger and sorrow, the beautiful smile was never absent from her sweet face, and their dear, lovely children were so good, and so obedient;—they were indeed a nice family, and could I have afforded to have kept them, they should never have been driven to seek another abode.

Uncle. Kind creature! your feelings do you honour, but what am I to do, in this perplexing and unfortunate affair?

Woman. Really Sir, I cannot say, the only clue that I know of, is, that Mr. Wiseman used to attend Mr. Proudfoot's School, as Drawing Master, at No. 7, Belle Vue Place;—there you may probably learn information respecting him.

Uncle. Very likely, I am much obliged to you,—I will go and enquire there instantly,

(turning back,) but ere I go, good Woman, (taking money from his purse) accept of a trifle, as a small compensation for the kindness you rendered to Mr. Wiseman and his family. Still continue my friend to nourish the milk of human kindness in your heart, and be assured, that a benevolent action will never lose its reward.

Woman (looking at the money and wiping her eyes). Well! who would have thought, that I should ever have heard any thing about the few paltry services I rendered to the dear Lady, and her family. How true it is that if we "cast our bread upon the waters, it will return to us after many days." Well, well! I trust that however poor I may become, I shall bear in mind, that I am not too poor, to be of some little use to my fellow creatures.

Uncle. I have to make an apology, to you Mr. Proudfoot, for calling here at this early hour of the day—thereby occupying a portion of the time which should be exclusively devoted to your pupils. But I trust my motive will plead my excuse. I have been informed that a person in whose welfare I feel much interested, has been in the habit of attending your school in the capacity of drawing master,—his name was (I believe) Wiseman—and as a favour, I request to know whether he attends

here at present ; or, if not, where he is likely to be found ?

Proudfoot (speaking in a drawling and conceited manner). Why, really sir, I cannot but confess, that a young man, bearing the name you mention, did, for some time, continue to attend my establishment, as the drawing master ; but his visits have ceased, for a considerable period. To do the young fellow justice, I cannot but admit that he was well-behaved, very industrious, and very well acquainted with the rules of his art. But then, he was in rather—that is—in short, he was in distressed circumstances, consequently not being able to make that genteel appearance, which is indispensable for those who have the *honour* of attending here, I was compelled to dismiss him. I assure you, sir, I felt sorry for the circumstances of the case, —but you must be aware, the thing could not be avoided.

Uncle (eying him with great contempt). I suppose then, sir, after having dismissed a man of merit and probity from your house, on account of his poverty, your tender feelings never led you to reflect what was to become of him,—you probably never afterwards gave yourself the trouble of caring how he lived, or where he lodged ?

Schoolmaster. Why,—as to that, sir, according to the old adage, “Self-preservation is the first law of nature,” and every man ought to know his own affairs best. For myself, I only study to mind my own business. But, now I recollect, I can possibly obtain Mr. Wiseman’s address for you,—for at the time of his dismissal my daughter, (Miss Proudfoot,) was taking lessons from him, and being a sensitive, sympathizing girl, she frequently expressed herself deeply grieved at what she chose to term, his unfortunate situation. I heard her tell Mr. Wiseman, she would retain his address, in the event of her having an opportunity of recommending him elsewhere. She will, doubtless, favour you with it, if such be your pleasure.

Uncle. By all means,—I earnestly desire to have it. (Aside)—Contemptible, unfeeling wretch! my blood boils to lay my cane over his shoulders.

Mr. Proudfoot introduces his daughter.

Mr. Worthy (rising, addresses her). Your father has just informed me, Madam, that you retain the address of an honest, but unfortunate man, of the name of Wiseman. I am a friend of his, and am exceedingly anxious to discover his abode.

Miss Proudfoot (taking it from a card-

case). Most willingly I give it you, and truly rejoice that Providence has at length raised up a friend for the distressed. I have seen poor Mr. Wiseman and his family, several times, since my dear Father discharged him from the school, and, I must own, I have felt most keenly for their misfortunes and misery. Oh, Sir, how frequently does merit lie in the shade, whilst ignorance and impudence bask in the sunshine of fortune! Dear Mrs. Wiseman! I thank heaven that a friend is raised up for thee! Oh, Sir, take the word of a stranger, and believe that she is fully entitled, and deserving of all your compassion. Long,—long has the iron hand of adversity laid fast hold of her,—long has she struggled with every imaginable want. Her husband sick, and unemployed,—two innocent lovely children, craving sustenance, without her having the means of procuring for them even a crust of bread. And to add to her bitterness, she is despised, rejected, and scorned, by her wealthy and unfeeling sisters. And yet, she has borne all with the utmost meekness and resignation. Oh, Sir, I have seen her when she has appeared more like an angel, than a mortal,—when her tongue refused to give utterance to her heart's sorrow,—when her full blue eye seemed to look

upwards, as if she was placing all her hope, all her confidence in One, who was best able to sustain her in the hour of anguish and of need. But, I fear her fragile form will not hold out much longer. I have not been able to see her for a week or two,—but when I beheld her last, she appeared ill able to resist much further calamity. But whilst I stand talking thus, I detain you from the house of suffering and want. Go, Sir, and may God bless you for your kindness; for you will be to them as the good Samaritan,—the best friend,—the friend in need.

Mr. Worthy takes her hand. Lady, accept an old man's thanks, — kindness of heart adds the greatest lustre to female beauty, (aside looking at the father) is it possible, for so unworthy a plant to produce so fine a flow'r! but I will strive to forget the father's inhumanity, in the compassion of the daughter. Lady adieu! may Heaven preserve, and still continue to bless you with its richest gift,—its most inestimable jewel,—compassion.

Uncle. Yes, this must be the street, and this the house (looking at the address). But can this be! is it possible, that my sweet Emily is an inhabitant of this wretched street? —of this darksome abode! Is it possible, that the fair cherub, whom I left twenty years

since, so innocent,—so beautiful; the idol of her fond parents,—the plaything of her elder sisters,—she, who was nursed in the lap of luxury, and surrounded by affection and affluence,—can my lovely Emily be thus early wedded to wretchedness,—to want,—to the world's scorn! and oh! far worse, than all! is it possible that her sisters have deserted so fair a creature,—steeled their hearts against their own flesh, and left the smiling pet of their early years to pine in all the horrors of want, to sink broken hearted to an untimely grave,—even whilst they riot in luxury, and waste their days in frivolous amusements? Oh mercy! oh feeling! whither have ye fled? oh woman! hast thou exchanged thy dove-like nature, for that of the serpent? Has wealth usurped the place of pity in thy breast, and art thou fallen from the bright, the beautiful, and the good, to become loathsome to the sight,—hateful even to man, to whom thou should'st ever be as an Angel of mercy and light,—a being, capable of moulding his rougher nature into all that is mild, gentle, and kind! but I am too hasty,—I am too hasty, an Eastern climate I find, has not improved my hereditary irritability, for have I not just parted from a fair young creature, as good as she was beautiful? And although a

perfect stranger, did she not cause this old heart of mine to glow with pleasure at her disinterested benevolence? Did she not even disarm the rancour I felt towards her proud and unfeeling father? Did she not remove a load of woe from my heart, by telling me, that my Emily, although sinking with hunger, penury, and despair, was still what every woman should be, "virtuous amidst trials, temptation, and sorrow?—A bright star reflecting her husband's honor? And though bowed down by the inflexible,—the iron hand of adversity,—did she not inspire me with the thought, that Emily was nevertheless earning the best of all titles for herself, as the patient christian,—the tender mother, and the faithful wife? Oh woman! truly, thou art woman still! a medal of creation, whose bright image may here and there, be nearly effaced by the rough usage of the world, but on the whole, goodness, and virtue are thy attributes,—and these like the loadstone, will never leave thee, —never lose their attractive power. Now then Emily, I must sum up courage to meet thee, but I feel, this heart which never quailed before the canon's mouth, now to fail me; the thought of beholding thee so changed,—so sunk in misery, is dreadful! but courage, I may yet be in time to heal the broken-spirit,

—to make the parents heart leap for joy, and to bring competence, happiness, and peace, to her threshold once more. Money! how insignificant hast thou ever appeared to me, but welcome art thou now, and truly valuable, for thou can'st aid me in stopping the tear of sorrow, and to raise a bright smile, on the cheek of woe.

Bailiff. I tell you young woman I can wait no longer; the law must have its course, and I have no power to stay its proceedings; I had no right to wait so long,—and perhaps even now my leniency will lose me my place. I ought to have seized every thing this morning, but for your telling me, you still anticipated relief from your friends.

Mrs. Wiseman. Alas! alas! I have hoped! I have been clinging to hope, but it is a phantom; I scarcely thought the coldest heart could have withstood the appeal, of such utter wretchedness as ours! “Oh my sisters!” the broken crumbs from your servants’ table, would be rich morsels for my famishing children; receive but these little ones within the portal of your door, and their unfortunate mother will freely forgive all your injustice towards her, and be content to die in obscurity,—blessing you with her latest breath.

Bailiff. As I told you before, I’m sorry

for your distress ; but grief wont pay a quarter's rent, so I must e'en see about removing the things, for the horse and cart have been standing at the door too long, and the landlord will not thank me for my diligence, particularly when he sees the few traps I have brought him.

Mrs. Wiseman. Bailiff, I know you have your duty to perform, but oh ! if you possess the heart and feeling of a man,—if you are a Father, and your little ones are dear to you,—spare me, I beseech you, the poor bed on which my innocent babes at present rest. It is so wretched, as to be of no value to your master ; but to me, it is still a boon. When tired nature, rendered more so from the want of food, closes the eye-lids of my dear babes in sleep, and steeps their senses in forgetfulness, I lay them there, and, for a little while, they are unconscious of their own, or their mother's misery.—Do not rob them of this small comfort,—oh, do not ; they will not need it long, if relief come not speedily !

Bailiff. I tell you, young woman I am a kind-hearted man as times go,—but I cannot depart from my instructions, which are,—to seize on every article of furniture in the room, and, as the bed will lie snugly at the bottom of the cart, for the other things to rest on—

I must e'en take that first—(Goes towards it.)

Mrs. Wiseman. Man! I conjure you, wake not my babes!—rouse them not at this moment, lest they ask food of their mother, which she has not to give—and she sinks dying at your feet, a maniac, heaping maledictions on you, even in death!

Bailiff (goes towards the bed, saying). This is trifling,—the money must be had, and—

Uncle. Wretch! Monster! what is thy demand? Begone,—leave the house,—leave a scene, which thy hard heart has not the feeling to relieve, or the sympathy to commiserate with.

Bailiff (looking impudently at Admiral Worthy). A mighty fine speech, Old Chap, but fine speeches cost nothing—Why, where did you drop from? Faith, you appear to have found an entrance here, as easily as if you walked in like myself, with a Sheriff's Warrant, in your pocket; but, to be sure, (looking around,) there's not much here that requires the protection of lock, or bar. "What's my demand," forsooth?—That's easier answered, than complied with, to my thinking.—My demand, Old Yellow Face, is just a quarter's rent, which amounts to four pounds; four shillings; Distress Warrant,

seven and sixpence; and your humble servant's days attention to his business, will be four and sixpence more;—making, in all, four pounds, sixteen shillings,—which I suppose, Old Boy, will be more than even *your pity* will like to pay for. As to “Begone,” (imitating the Uncle's voice,) I shall go, depend on't, as soon as I get my “pound of flesh,” as the man says in the play, ha! ha! ha!

Uncle (passionately). Petty tyrant of the law, there is thy money,—(gives him money) begone now,—or I will spare thee the trouble of walking down stairs, by throwing thy huge carcase of unmanliness out of the window.

Bailiff. Why, having got my money, and not wishing to give you so very much trouble, I beg leave to wish you a very good morning.

Mrs. Wiseman (much agitated). Kind, generous stranger! how opportunely,—yet unexpectedly have you succoured my distress: my heart bounds to offer its grateful acknowledgments, but alas! words fail me,—I am lost in astonishment, admiration, and gratitude! Oh sir! even you who know so well how to sympathize with, and relieve affliction,—you cannot comprehend my present feelings,—I would express my gratitude,—but—but—(she stops overpowered with tears).

Uncle (aside). My poor, poor Emily ! she does not recollect me ; alas ! how should she, for I should never have recognized the lovely, laughing girl, in the still beautiful, but misery stricken wife and mother.

(Aloud taking her hand.) Cheer up, cheer up my dear madam, the storm that rages the fiercest, is the quickest spent, and the sunshine is ever brightest, after having been momentarily obscured.

Mrs. Wiseman. Oh sir, how beautiful does human nature appear, when it is occupied in doing good,—when it compassionates distress,—relieves the aching heart, and dries the tears of sorrow.

(Children wake and come forward. Emily presents them to their benefactor.) Generous man, thou wilt have thy reward,—my innocent children shall be taught to bless thee, and rest assured, thy charity has already been viewed by One, who sees the secrets of all hearts,—the motives of every action ; by One, who will not forget to record thy benevolence in the pure page of immortality, in the eternal register of glory.

Uncle (much affected). I beseech you spare me ! I feel, I do not deserve the merit you assign to me. I have done no more than any indifferent stranger would, and ought to

have done, who in beholding distress, had the heart to feel, and the means to relieve. I have still a great duty to discharge towards you, and your's, and trust I may yet be in time, to change your "mourning into joy," and to see health, and happiness, once more the inmates of your dwelling.

Mrs. Wiseman (looking astonished). Sir! —do I dream? What mean your words? Duty! duty—to discharge to me and mine! (she ruminates) oh God! I thank thee,—yes,—yes,—I comprehend all now,—my affliction has at length opened the avenue to my sisters hearts! it has attuned their souls to pity,—it has touched the secret spring of compassion, and they at length, extend the hand of forgiveness, and reconciliation, to their long exiled Emily.—Oh welcome, welcome, all my misery, if it has indeed tended to improve their social affections, and made them feel the happiness of living for others, as well as for themselves. Oh Sir! lead me instantly to my sisters, that I may teach my babes to know, and love those, who would succour them in their early sorrow.

Uncle. Sisters! profane not the name,—call not such, sisters, but demons! fiends, in the shape and garb of women! rather would I lead thee, dear Emily, to sue for compassion.

from the hungry tiger, for from it thou mightest expect as much mercy ! (She starts and looks on him with confusion ; he takes her hand.) Start not,—nor grieve, that the promised assistance comes not from their hands,—from me, poor feeble weeping one, thou shalt have thy due. Yes Emily, from thy poor old Uncle ! shalt thou receive wealth ; and more,—thou shalt be enabled to triumph over thy unjust,—thy heartless sisters.

Emily. Oh sir ! vengeance does not belong to me, nor do I desire it ; I would know no other triumph, than to reign in the hearts of all by love,—but you spoke of my receiving assistance from my Uncle,—from my Uncle ! Uncle ! alas ! I have no Uncle,—no relatives, save my sisters !—but—but—(she ruminates) I fancy, I recollect,—yes—surely,—I have an indistinct,—vague recollection, of an Uncle, (ruminates again) surely,—I remember how I used to sit on the carpet, in the drawing room of the old Hall, and there strewed about my freshly gathered flow'rs,—and that seated on a chair by my side, I used to see a gentleman, whose dress attracted my infant attention,—surely,—surely,—it was a naval uniform ! I think, I remember holding the bright flowers sportively towards him,—and then he would snatch me to his arms, and kiss

me tenderly. Yes, it must have been the same whom my sisters called by the name of Uncle, and whose name, was so revered amongst us,—but sir, as I grew up, I learnt the fate of this kind relative; he was a sailor, and died at his post, whilst gallantly fighting for his king, and country.

Uncle (energetically). No,—no dear Emily, he lived,—I trust to do his duty, not only to his king and country, but to thee; he lived to fight the battle, and to breast the storm; he is now returned, and although old and weather beaten, he has still sufficient courage left, to defend the right,—sufficient strength to protect the defenceless, and a heart, to feel for the wrongs of another; especially when thou my Emily, art the defenceless,—the oppressed, and the wronged. Come then, to thy old Uncle's arms, and believe that in them, thou hast found a resting place, large enough for thyself,—thy husband, and thy children.

Mrs. Wiseman. My Uncle! so long lost! yet restored to me in an hour of such bitter misery! (falls into his arms.)

Uncle. Yes my dear Emily,—returned to thee like an old hulk that has seen, and stood hard service,—the worse for wear it is true, but not leaky, girl! not leaky!

Mrs. Wiseman (fondly). Dear, dear Uncle!

a bright vision passes before me! I see our happy home restored,—my husband in health,—my children preserved,—my life made happy, and you the blessed instrument of all.

Uncle. Believe rather my Emily that you owe all to your own truth and virtue. After twenty years of absence, I returned to my native land, to the home of your childhood, and found you fled; aspersion blackened your character, and foul injustice wronged you,—and its authors, I am grieved to say it, were your own sisters! You had become an alien, from the roof which should have sheltered, and protected you! I went amongst strangers, and heard blessings showered on your head,—by them you were held up as the model of daughters,—wives, and mothers. I came to you unknown, and found you all, (save in fortune,) what my fond heart had long ago prognosticated. And now my dear Emily, as I feel that my old blood will soon be congealing towards the freezing point, I have resolved upon this that my nearly worn out old craft, shall ride quietly at anchor for the remainder of my days; I shall therefore just ask to be made one amidst your family circle, and although no longer able to fight my battles o'er again in person,—why,—I'll e'en fire my broadsides round your hearth, and win my

victories over again, by recounting them to these dear children, who will I hope, learn to call me, as their mother did before them, their dear, dear Nunkey.

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear, dear Nunkey! let me call you so still! oh! if my beloved husband but recovers, what happiness may yet be in store for us all.

Uncle. I have learned, that your good husband is at present very unwell, and an inmate of the hospital; but courage,—we will remove him to his home,—to his wife,—to his children, and thanks to prize money promotion, and to competence; my life on't, but you'll find, that he has a long lease of years yet to run. . Happiness, happiness my Emily, is the best physician amongst the whole faculty. (He takes the boy's hand.) But my fine little fellow,—here has your old Uncle been spinning a long yarn, and has never yet asked you your name?

Boy. My name sir, is George Worthy Wiseman.

Uncle (much affected). Now dear boy, do I rejoice that thou art heir to an unsullied name: I have been young, but now I am old, but for thy sake, especially since thou inheritest my name, do I feel proud of the boast that none can throw a slur, on thy Uncle's,

youth,—or place a stigma on his more advanced years. Riches, boy, I can give thee,—but these are as dust in the balance, if not joined to true honour, and integrity. Courage and conquest may give a man renown, without rendering his character honorable : fame may also blow her trumpet of praise, and yet withhold her esteem. The poet did not paint his character too highly, in declaring, “That an honest man was the noblest work of God.”

Emily ! learning the name thou hast given to thy boy, has almost unmanned me,—it is a compliment I was not prepared for ; and it but adds another link to my affection for thee, and thine. Prepare now, dearest, to leave a scene, fraught with so much of human misery. I looked out a healthy and pleasantly situated house, on my way hither, which we can occupy instantly—it being ready furnished, there will be time enough afterwards to select a more becoming habitation ; and although I cannot place my Emily as high in station, as she ranks in virtue,—still she shall be put in possession of all the comforts which wealth can purchase ; for I am persuaded she will know how to use her temporal blessings—considering them only as a trust committed to her charge, for which she will be responsible.

As soon as I have seen my Emily to her new home, I will go and look after Mr. Wiseman, and trust (patting her fondly) to bring back *good* news, to his wife.

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear Uncle! God will reward, and bless you (embraces her children). Now dear children, we are going to leave this house, for one of happiness, contentment, and peace.

Boy. Oh! Mamma, I am so glad,—then we shall all get food. Oh! I am so very—very hungry!

Uncle (shudders). Hunger!—horrible!—Why did not I think of this? (takes a biscuit from his pocket) Eat this, dear child, and you shall soon have plenty more. Oh! may this be the first, and last time, of thy uttering so dismal a plaint!

Boy (Takes the biscuit, and breaking it into two pieces, gives one half to his mother, the other to his sister).

Uncle. Why how is this? I thought, dear boy, you were very hungry?

Boy (hesitating). Yes Sir—but dear Mamma, and Sister—they are very hungry too!

Uncle (clasps him to his breast). My brave—brave boy!—thou art already a hero, self-denying to thy little wants and pleasures in youth,—I see the promise of thy manhood

being useful; thy old age honourable. Come, come, Emily, let us away,—these little ones demand our instant care. If there be any thing you value here, we can return for it afterwards.

Uncle (Takes her hand). Dearest Emily, why thus overwhelm me with thanks? The happy smile on your cheek, is a sufficient recompence for the small comfort I have been instrumental in providing for you,—think no more of the matter,—think only of happiness, and see! I must remind you that this long day is wearing to a close. The dear children will soon need tired nature's kind restorer,—and, ere I sleep, I must see your husband, for I long to bring you a favourable report of him, that you may be enabled to close a day in peace, whose dawn, broke on you so inauspiciously.

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear Uncle! ever, ever thoughtful,—go, and may thy benevolent errand, be blessed in its kind mission!

Mrs. Wiseman (alone). Worthy—worthy man!—in one short day thou hast given comfort to a heart loaded with sorrow,—thou hast preserved my helpless babes, and now goest to raise the head of their suffering, mourning father. Surely mercy will follow thee; for thou fulillest the perfect law of

love ! How clearly can I trace the gracious hand of a kind providence, through every incident of my life ! Even from the days of my early childhood, when life appeared all joy and sunshine, until now, that maturer years have brought reflection, and the cloud of care has stamped its impress on my brow. Yes, yes,—through every scene,—even from the time when my young tears fell, and were forgotten, as soon as shed,—until the period, when I mourned in secret, and my “spirit was disquieted within me.” Yet, amidst all, I can say, Thou, oh ! Father “hast been my refuge, and my rock of defence.” Inasmuch then as thou did'st not forsake me, in my day of adversity, oh ! keep me from forgetting thee, now that thou art pleased to send me prosperity ! Cause my heart to glow with gratitude to thee, for all thy mercies,—and make it expand with christian charity, towards all my fellow creatures (turns to her children).

Now, sweet ones, you need rest,—and Mama has such a nice, nice bed, for her darlings.

Boy. Oh ! Mamma,—the evening is so beautiful,—we are not tired now : may we not go into the pretty garden, that kind Uncle told us about, and remain up until he comes back again ?

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear children, I cannot deny you so innocent a wish. Yes, you shall see your kind benefactor again, ere you sleep, and Mamma will also go with you to the pretty garden. (She embraces her boy, and addresses him,)

Dear, dear George! may the events of this day be deeply engraven on thy young mind; and may they ever prove incentives to thee, not to weary in well doing. And Oh! may it be thy mother's part to train thee in the ways of piety, in every christian virtue!

Uncle at the Hospital.

Doctor. I shall have much pleasure, Sir, in taking you to see Mr. Wiseman, although I doubt much, whether even the sight of a friend will be sufficient to arouse the poor man from his state of lethargy,—for he appears fast forgetting the world, and its woes!

Uncle. I trust, Doctor, that he is not so far sunk, but that something may be done for him yet?

Doctor. Sir, we have none amongst all the faculty, clever enough to prescribe to a mind diseased. We may heal a diseased body,—but the mind, Sir! faith, it beats the science of medicine out and out, and baffles the skill of the whole college of surgeons!

Uncle. I grant you that,—but permit me

to talk to him of hope,—of comfort,—these may operate, when your specifics fail.

Doctor. Hope! comfort!—pardon my incredulity: I cannot believe it. For you know that, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,” and he has been too long deceived in such terms to place reliance on them now;—he trusted them too long, and after all, found he had been only pursuing shadows. I wish most heartily that your words may comfort, and restore him, for Mr. Wiseman is a gentleman, in whom I feel much interested. He is a man, Sir, possessing no common mind, or common feelings; and the constant state of excitement he has kept himself in, respecting his family, has done more to drag him to an untimely grave, than all the ill-health he has laboured under. Had he possessed a vigorous constitution, it might have enabled him to have borne up under his almost unparalleled misfortunes; but inheriting a delicate frame, the weight has been too much for him, and in my opinion, he will sink under it.

Uncle (energetically). He must not, Sir,—he must not. The gallant ship may bend before the storm, but she’ll right, Sir,—she’ll right.

Doctor (smiling). My dear Sir, I trust your simile may prove correct; but your

friend, as far as I understand, has not been the man to shrink from the storm of adversity. Its violence fairly laid him prostrate, and kept him powerless. As an artist, I have heard he was very clever; but then, you know, Painters and Poets must die, before their worth is admitted. Over-exertion, too poorly paid for, brought on a weak state of health,—increased labour, whilst in this state, gradually unfitted him for following up his profession; and when at length he found himself on a sick bed, the thought of what his wife and children would suffer,—this brought on a mental malady, for which, as I said before, we have no remedy. I only knew your friend from report, ere he was brought here,—but what I did hear of him, was to his advantage; and if public opinion gives a falling man a good name, why it speaks volumes. When Mr. Wiseman married, the youngest daughter of old Colonel Worthy, every one supposed he, would have had the means afforded him of pushing himself in the world, and would ultimately have attained the head of his profession. He only married a week or two previous to the Colonel's death, and when this event happened, to the surprise of every one, the favourite child of the Colonel was cut off with a shilling, and her elder sisters were left co-heiresses to his

immense wealth. I need not tell you that, Mr. Wiseman is from a stock as ancient, and honourable, as the Worthy's; but then he was poor, Sir!—poor, save in character, and ability. And poverty, even when allied with true greatness, is seldom allowed a place by the side of riches. One would have imagined that the elder sisters would, at least, have allowed Mrs. Wiseman a sufficiency to live on, instead of which, the only thing they gave her, was their cold scorn; and thus she became an outcast from her father's house, and a beggar on the world.

Poor Wiseman might have recovered from his illness, but, as I said before, the deep privations to which he knew his amiable wife, and beloved children would be exposed,—this thought pressed so heavily upon his mind, that without something little short of a miracle, is wrought in his favour, he'll die, Sir,—die of a mental disease, generally called “a broken heart.”

Uncle (much agitated). He shall not!—he must not die, Sir! Lead me to him,—I have that to impart, which will give health to his mind, and strength to his body.

Doctor (laughing). By Jove, Sir, 'tis a pity that you're not one of the faculty! With *such* skill, we should have you dubbed by her

Majesty's letters patent, "Sir Wonderful Cure All, Physician Extraordinary," but pardon me, my good Sir,—I will lead you immediately to your friend; and permit me to make this observation,—that whatever be the nature of your communication, be cautious how you deliver it:—joy has been known to kill, as well as grief.

Uncle. Depend on my prudence.

Doctor. Well Mr. Wiseman, I have returned earlier than I promised; and, see, I have brought a kind friend of your's with me.

Mr. Wiseman. Friend! alas Sir, the poor have not many friends!

Uncle. My dear Sir, for the sake of humanity, let us hope, that right feeling, and brotherly kindness have not quite ceased to exist in the world. Hearing of your being very unwell, I took the liberty of calling to see you.

Mr. Wiseman. Sir, you do me a great favour.

Uncle. Favour! pshaw Sir,—no favour at all, without it be a selfish one. I came here, hoping to find you better, as I had a favour to request from you, and I hope you will soon get quite well, and be able to oblige me.

Mr. Wiseman (much agitated). Alas Sir, I have been too long the recipient of favours, rather than the bestower of any. I wish I had the power of obliging you, or any one else; but I am powerless,—fast sinking to my grave, with the soul-harrowing thought that my last moments will be imbittered by my own injustice! My kind Doctor here will tell you, Sir, that I have brought an innocent wife, and helpless infants, to misery and want: and now the husband, the father,—or rather call him their destroyer,—is permitted to sink into the rest of the grave, whilst they will have to endure the world's scorn, “the whips and stings of fortune,—the proud man's contumely,—and the oppressor's wrong.” This, Sir, is the unhappy being you would ask a favour of!

Doctor. Mr. Wiseman is unjust to himself, and thus he continually indulges in self-upbraidings, and accuses himself for circumstances which he never could have foreseen, nor had the power to avert.

Uncle. Cheer up, my good Sir, cheer up,—the dullest day will have a close. You said just now, “that had you the power, you would gladly oblige me, or any one else.” You will not, surely then, feel too proud to accept that favour at the hands of another,

which, under different circumstances, you would wish another to receive from you? Now, look at me, Sir :—I am an old weather-beaten tar, but nevertheless, neither weather nor clime prevented Dame Fortune from pouring her golden stores into my lap : they say she is a fickle jade, but she could not have been very hard to please, when she took a fancy to my cut and colour. Perhaps it was because I remained an old bachelor, that she thus favoured me ; at any rate, I have enough for myself, and something to spare for others ; therefore my dear Sir, if *money* will assist in establishing your health, either mentally or bodily,—why, you will oblige me by accepting a little of what I can well spare.

Mr. Wiseman. Generous man ! whoever you are, accept my grateful thanks. For myself,—I shall shortly be beyond the reach of earthly want ; but if you will transfer your benevolence to my widowed wife, and to my fatherless babes, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your kindness has not been ill-bestowed,—and you will give peace to a dying husband,—to a broken-hearted father !

Uncle. Dying husband !—broken-hearted father ! Nonsense : rather let me give happi-

ness and comfort to the living husband, the fond father. Why, my dear Sir, 'twould be madness to give up a gallant ship for lost, because she was a little leaky, and made but little way in a mountain of sea! Keep the head of your ship to the wind, a little longer, and you'll soon find she'll weather the storm. Courage, Sir, courage;—be calm, be steady; and you'll reach the harbour of safety yet. Live my dear Sir,—live, and become an honour to the profession, which, I am told, you love better than any thing else,—I mean, best after Emily, and your little ones, eh?

Mr. Wiseman, starts at the name of his wife, and is much agitated: the Uncle does not perceive it.

I told you I wanted a favour at your hands, and perhaps I had better explain what it is. Now I happen to have a blue-eyed little Niece, whom I love as well as if she were my own child; and I cannot help flattering myself, but she loves her poor old Uncle, and would prize his portrait highly. What say you?—would not my old weather-beaten phiz make a capital picture? Likeness it must be,—and if Horatio Wiseman (*Mr. Wiseman* starts again) will not take upon himself the task of committing a fac simile of the same to canvass, why—no other artist

shall have the honour. I want it attended to as quickly as possible ; and as I know I cannot expect a good article, at an inferior price, I have resolved to give five hundred guineas for the same,—one half to be paid down as soon as begun,—the other on its completion. I must say, if you are not able to oblige me, I shall feel greatly disappointed. The Doctor here (nudging his elbow) thinks that when you are removed to your own pleasant home, with Emily for your nurse, and the little ones for your playthings, your health will soon be recruited ; and when this is the case, you can amuse yourself in taking off my handsome frontispiece.

Mr. Wiseman (endeavours to raise himself higher in the bed, and looks with the utmost surprise at the Uncle). Sir, your offer is most generous,—but pardon me. Whilst you shower your favours in such a free manner, methinks you speak as freely. (Speaks weak and languidly.) I cannot believe of course—that any man—much more a gentleman—would—take—advantage—of—one—in my position :—a creature—bowed down—with sickness—and crushed—by misfortune.... Therefore—it—is hard,—perhaps unjust—to—to reconcile—your words—with any—other meaning—than—that—of—

genuine benevolence.... But, Sir (dreadfully affected) I know—of—no man—who—has the *right*—who ought—to *presume*—to speak of—my angel Wife—and call her Emily!.... Surely virtue is not—despicable—because—it is—allied to poverty!.... Surely—respect—is due—to worth,—although it—be found—in an humble—shed!... Tell me then, Sir, even in such an hour as the present,—when your proffered bounty would save my wife, and children,—whether I should be justified in sanctioning their acceptance of your (agitated)—your charity. Oh! pardon—a sick man's impetuosity—but, tell me—oh! tell me,—why call you my wife, Emily?—how know you my babes?—how did you become thus intimately acquainted with my family,—and my misfortunes?

Uncle. Mr. Wiseman, compose yourself. The honour of your name, and family,—and the virtue of your peerless wife,—is as dear to me, as to yourself. In asking you to paint my portrait, knowing your love for your profession, I thought to have aroused—to have excited you; for it's said, "that being occupied in what affords us most pleasure, cheats us out of pain, and every other ill." But as I have, I fear, unintentionally distressed you, let me hasten in as few

words as possible, to retrieve my error:—

You might not have heard that your father-in-law had a brother,—or, if you had heard so, you perhaps also believed the report, that he died at sea, many years ago,—but the report was untrue. I remained abroad, and after the war was over, and my Sovereign had no longer need of my services, I determined on returning to my native land,—*I am that Brother!* I have much to tell you, but shall now, only say, that I returned home a few days since. I sought my Nieces, and learnt with regret, the unequal, and unjust distribution, of my Brother's property. (Angrily) Why Colonel Worthy must have been insane, Sir, — and the validity of the will ought to be questioned.— But, setting that aside for the present, I thank God that I am at least spared to make restitution to the wronged. Therefore Mr. Wiseman, consider your Wife as the sole heiress to her Uncle, Admiral Worthy's, property. She is already placed in a comfortable home, and your dear children are with her, healthy and happy; and your old Uncle (if you will allow him the appellation), if he has your consent, as well as Emily's, will domicile himself beneath your family roof: he only waits for the finishing stroke, as you

artists term it, to complete our happiness,—which is, to see Mr. Wiseman quite well, and snugly ensconced as master of his household. Your fond wife listens, at this moment, to catch the glad sound of the wheels of the carriage, which conveys her husband to her arms. Already she is thinking of an hundred little delicacies, to tempt his appetite,—and of a thousand little nameless attentions, to soothe and beguile her beloved invalid. Your dear children, are, I doubt not, gathering the sweetest flowers, to deck “dear Papa’s bedroom.” And the old “*salt wave*,” who stands by you, is waiting to pilot your somewhat shattered bark into safe harbourage,—there to see you new-rig’d, and new-manned, that you may be fit again for service.—So pipe all hands a-hoy, Doctor, and I’ll take the patient in tow.

Mr. Wiseman. Is this reality—or do I dream? Emily! shall I see thee again,—be enabled to work for thee again! Life is, indeed, worth living for, if such blessings are in store!

Uncle. Yes, yes, you’ve lots to do; plenty of orders on hand, for some time to come. Mind, I’m not to be cheated out of my portraits, nor you of your reward; and after that (laughing), I’ve bespoke four family portraits more, on the same terms.

Mr. Wiseman. Oh! for strength to execute the work! Oh! my Emily, what joy, if I am only spared to labour for thee and thine! Oh! God, restore me to health!

Uncle. And I see no cause why you should labour for any one else. When you have painted your own likeness, your dear partner's,—and your sweet children's,—you will have completed the family group I spoke of; and then, if you please, you may make a present of your pallet and easel, to the first person you like.

Now Doctor, I think in the home which awaits Mr. Wiseman, he will be as comfortably provided for, as here,—suffer him to be removed on the bed he lies, that he may not be disturbed, and I will take care, that the Hospital shall lose nothing by the loan.

Doctor. Well, Sir, I see nothing objectionable in your proposal. I perceive by the conveyance, which you have in waiting, that Mr. Wiseman will be perfectly free from the night air,—and of course, if removed where every attention can be shewn him, every comfort provided, he will be as well off as here; and if you will allow me, I shall be happy to call and see Mr. Wiseman in the morning, as I have ever felt interested in my patient,—and of course cannot feel less so now

Uncle. Sir, you are very kind,—come, and give him your valuable services,—do all you can to restore him, and trust to the honour of a blue jacket for your reward.

Doctor Believe me, Admiral Worthy, that I never yet looked upon the face of a British sailor, but the word, *Honour*, rose instinctively to my lips. The British sailor, Sir, whatever his rank, or degree, is ever associated in my mind, with all that is manly, generous, and brave. I never pass an honest tar, but my heart seems to say to me, “there goes your security for your home, your hearth, your wife, your children.” I look upon a sailor as one of the chief guardians of our native Isle,—one of the chief props of our nation’s greatness. Talk not to me, Admiral, of reward,—every honest man possesses a rich reward, when his conscience tells him, he has acted rightly.

I will see your friend frequently,—and if, as I hope, he gets restored to health, to happiness, and to his family, I shall indeed have my reward; and, what is more, I’ll honestly confess, though this will be departing from our general rule, that there are men in the world as wise as the doctors.

Uncle (laughing). A very handsome salute you’ve given the navy, Doctor, for which I

owe you a broadside. As soon as our young friend here gets better, I shall hope to have the pleasure of your society frequently, when I shall ask you to pledge me in a sailor's toast,—namely, "Sweethearts and Wives,"—and we'll add, "Nieces" to the bargain:—what say you, Mr. Wiseman? And, I'm sure, if a sailor would'nt nail his flag to the mast, and fight whilst an inch of his vessel was left to protect such—why, he's not a sailor at all, but a lubberly coward.—There's Wiseman laughing at us,—that's right my fine fellow. Sunmons the attendants! Now bear a hand, and we'll veer away.

Mrs. Wiseman. My dear Uncle will, surely, return shortly,—he has been gone nearly two hours! What if he should find my dear husband worse! My heart beats wildly,—I hope,—but yet I fear! Oh, Father of mercy, spare my husband,—complete the great blessing thou hast vouchsafed me, that whilst thou givest me competence, spare my partner to share it with me!

Hark!—surely, I heard the sound of carriage wheels!—(listens.)—Yes, yes,—and now they stop. Oh, my kind benefactor, bring back the good news you prophesied.

Uncle (running hastily in). Compose yourself, dearest Emily,—I have brought back

your husband: he is very weak, but he will soon get strong again under your affectionate care, therefore exert your fortitude, and meet him cheerfully, calmly, and all will yet be well.

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear, dear Horatio!—is it possible I shall so soon see thee—wait on thee! Yes—yes—I will be calm, cheerful, and patient—any thing, so that thou art but spared to me.

Mr. Wiseman is brought in.—As soon as they rest him, *Mrs. Wiseman* embraces, and speaks to him:—

Beloved Horatio!—blessed moment, that sees thee once more beneath thy own roof,—once more beside thy wife,—thy children!

Mr. Wiseman (embracing her). Unexpected—unlooked for happiness, my Emily! What do we not owe to our generous benefactor! My children awake and up!—Come, sweet ones, and kiss your poor Papa, who has been too long absent from both Mamma and you.

Children cling to him,—the Boy speaks:—

Boy. Dear Papa! I am so glad you are come back again! Now Mamma won't cry about Papa any more. Dear Papa! you will like this place,—we have such a nice house,—and oh, such a pretty, pretty garden!

See,—I gathered all these (holding up some flowers). I promised them to Mamma,—but I'm sure she'll give them all to you now.

Mr. Wiseman. Dear, dear boy! that is the kind gentleman who has made us all so happy. You must ever love him,—ever prove kind to him,—and above all, you must pray that God will bless him.

Uncle. Mr. Wiseman must talk no more to-night. Dear Emily, you must immediately assume authority, and order that this husband of your's be taken instantly to his room. The dear children, also, need rest, and I am sure you feel greatly fatigued yourself,—I would advise your taking refreshment, and retiring early, and I trust on the morrow to see you all better.

Servant enters, and gives the Uncle a card. Two ladies below, Sir, request that, although late, you will see them for a few minutes.

Uncle reads the card, and turns pale with anger :—

Your sisters Emily! How could they so quickly have discovered our place of abode? And how dare they approach, and presume to disturb this sanctuary of peace, by their presence? (To the Servant)—Go! give the Ladies back their card, and tell them your master knows them no more for ever!

Mrs. Wiseman (speaks hurriedly to the Servant). Stop!—stop! Retire!—return for your message, when rung for. She turns to her Uncle, and takes his hand:—Dear Uncle! recall, I beseech you, those dreadful words.—Suffer your poor Emily to become a suppliant for her sisters. Lavish not, I entreat you, all your kindness on my head. Give me not all your blessing.—Oh! shelter not one of your Brother's children, and spurn the others from your door!

Uncle (gravely). Did they not spurn you, Emily?—drive you an outcast from their door?

Mrs. Wiseman (speaking kindly.) No, dear Uncle, no—I voluntarily left my Father's roof, for this dear man's (laying her hand on her husband's shoulder).

Mr. Wiseman. And he who took thee from thy home, my Emily, gave thee but a sorry one in return.

Uncle. My good fellow,—you provided for her, as long as your means, and health, and strength, permitted you,—and no man could do more.....But Emily, seek not to turn me from my purpose.—I have done with your Sisters,—they see my face no more!

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear Uncle! you, who are so good, so kind,—you, who possess such

a thorough knowledge of the world, and its ways,—you, whose every thought glows with benevolence,—with philanthropy,—tell me,—say, are not our judgments rash, when from just a single action, we draw our own conclusions, and form our opinions, respecting the frailty of our fellow creatures? Oh! surely we have not even the right to judge lightly of others—much more condemn them.

Uncle. Emily! they have gone too far. Remember these little ones (points to the children);—had they mercy, even for these? A Mother may forgive an injury committed against herself—but can she plead for the destroyers of her children?

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear Uncle, your excitement causes you to be unjust towards yourself. You speak not as you would act, if similarly situated as myself. If I cease to view the failings of my fellow creatures, much more those of my own sisters, with the eye of forgiveness—how dare I hope for mercy from God, whom I have so often offended? We should learn to forgive *much*, remembering *how much* we all need forgiveness.

Uncle. When I think how deeply they have injured you,

Mrs. Wiseman. The deeper the injury, the

more we should struggle to overcome it with good.

Uncle. How is it possible to overcome such ?

Mrs. Wiseman. By forgiveness. "The brave, only, know how to forgive !

Uncle. But, they were doubly your enemies,—they even armed themselves against you ; and their weapons were "deceit," and "slander."

Mrs. Wiseman (smiling). Knowing this, dear Uncle, it is certainly our duty to use the best means, to endeavour to disarm them.

Uncle. How would you effect this ?

Mrs. Wiseman. Simply by kindness, and generosity.

Uncle. Emily, Emily,—I know not what to say :—you almost persuade me, that I'm wrong, and that all you say is right.

Mrs. Wiseman (coaxingly). Now, dear, dear Uncle, is it not natural for us to imitate those whom we love and respect ?—Have you not set me the example ?—Are you not, yourself, an exemplification of all that is charitable and benevolent ? How do you expect I can so quickly forget the lesson I have learnt from such an able preceptor ?

Uncle. Inestimable creature !—Where, and when, did you learn to think and act thus ?

Mrs. Wiseman. I tell you again, dear Uncle, even from yourself. Listen,—and I'll prove it to you, for at this moment I recollect a simple circumstance, which made more than an ordinary impression on my mind,—that good seed, however accidentally or thoughtlessly scattered, will nevertheless take root, spring up, and flourish :—

When a little girl, just capable of holding my pen, and joining my letters together, I felt ambitious to write a long copy—a whole page through—such as I used to see my sisters write; and one day in turning over the leaves of one of their writing books, was struck with a large text copy, it being so beautifully written: one of my sisters remarked it at the same time, and immediately exclaimed, “Ah! that copy Uncle George wrote in my book, just before he went to sea. Poor Uncle, she continued, he's dead now!” The words of the copy struck me even then. I ruled my paper, and copied them; and it was the first whole sentence I had ever written. May I repeat the words of your copy, dear Uncle?

Uncle (smiling). Do, if you please, for I have quite forgotten them.

Mrs. Wiseman. They were these,—(looking at him affectionately,)—“To err is human, to forgive, divine!”

Uncle. Emily, Emily,—you have conquered! I will go to your sisters,—I will bring them to your feet,—only,—only—child of my heart—oblige your poor old Uncle, by letting the first concession come from them,—from those who have so long done injustice to thy angel purity. Virtue, virtue,—thy power is irresistible!—by thee we are taught to think humanely,—to act generously,—to fulfil our duty sacredly and inviolably.

Uncle (sternly). Well Ladies! to what am I to attribute the honour of a visit from you?—particularly at this late hour, and before I am scarcely settled within the threshold of my new dwelling?

The Sisters look confused—the elder speaks:—

Oh!—Dear Uncle,—since you left us this morning, we have known no peace of mind. You quitted us in such visible anger, and we feel bound to acknowledge, that you had just cause. We have used every means to find you out, during the day; at length our footman, after having made strict enquiry of almost every house agent, learnt that you had taken this house. We are therefore come, humbly to beg your pardon, and to entreat that you will give up *all thoughts* of living here alone; we trust

you will do us the favour of returning with us,—of making our house your home. With regard to our too long estranged Sister, we are willing to become reconciled to her, and to allow her, from our Father's property, whatever you may consider is her due.

Uncle. Nieces!—the charity that is compulsory, is not worth accepting. Emily wants not your assistance now,—therefore your proffered bounty comes too late! Neither, must you sue for my pardon,—for against me, you have not offended. If you really see your guilty conduct in the right light,—if you feel truly sorry for it—go—plead for forgiveness from your Maker, and then ask it of her, whom you have so cruelly, and so unjustly wronged. Go to her, and in her pardon, learn the great lesson of Christian charity. Had Emily possessed the smallest particle of the worldly-mindedness—of the pride—envy, and uncharitableness, which you have both cultivated so largely, that small particle would have been sufficient to have banished her from her Uncle's presence for ever;—for I could not have seen such wrongs heaped on any one, without despising its guilty authors. But she pleads for you,—and though you have pointed the barbed arrow, until it rankled in her heart, she is still willing to forget, that

the wound has been ever inflicted,—she is willing to forget every thing, but that you are Sisters in the best of bonds—in unity and love. Her dear children, you have never seen! One would have supposed, that those innocent ones, would have been the objects of your proudest care,—that their infant artlessness, would have reconciled every difference, and that, as women, you would have clasped to your bosoms the tender sprouts, so nearly allied to you—and made such, the connecting link between you. Thank God! it is not too late, to retrieve your error—happily you have only to sue for pardon from one, who anxiously waits to accord it, ere it be supplicated for. As regards myself—my decision is taken, and is unalterable.—This is my home, until I can look around for one more eligible. Emily, her husband and family, will possess my wealth, and govern my household; and your old Uncle will feel but too proud, too happy, to be allowed a small niche in one of their family corners,—where he hopes to pass the evening of his days, in the haven of virtue, and of peace. (To the Nieces, gravely) You have sufficient of the world's wealth, and as you use, or abuse it, so must you expect your reward. Come and see us, as often as you please,—a kind welcome will always greet

you. You will perhaps give orders for your carriage to wait a little, and join your Uncle in the first evening meal he takes himself, beneath his own roof, since his return to his Fatherland? (They look confused, and penitent, and each takes his arm.)

Emily. My dear Sisters!

Elder Sister. Shame and contrition, oh, my Sister!—we deeply feel, we have not words to express our sorrow, for our heartless conduct! We can only hope that you will extend your forgiveness, to — (They both weep bitterly).

Mrs. Wiseman. Dear Sisters! double my present joys, by sharing them,—let all the past be buried in oblivion,—and from this hour, and for ever, let us entertain towards each other the tenderest and purest affection! Here is my dear husband—(Mr. Wiseman gives each of them his hand)—Accept him as your Brother,—he is deserving of all your regard. And here are my dear children—may they prove the pledges,—the sureties, that shall bind us all in the future, in a life of love. (The Aunts embrace the children.)

Uncle (rubbing his hands, with delight). Well, well,—I thought there never could have been a finer sight than to see the enemy surrender to the music of the guns, of our

gallant seventy-four !—and I'm sure I always considered, that the firmest ground, and the easiest to tread upon, was the planks of the quarter-deck ;—but I have this day been taught—aye, and made to feel it too—that it is a far nobler sight, to behold anger and revenge, striking their colours to peace and love ! Yes, surely, virtue must be the surest ground, on which to stand any where. Why, it is both latitude and longitude, and the safest compass to steer by, as it never deviates to the right or left, but always directs on in a safe and happy course ; it sweetens every blessing, and is an antidote to every misfortune ; it makes us benevolent, kind, friendly, patient—in short,—VIRTUE ! thy joys are peculiarly thy own—I feel it—I feel it ! Why it even cures an old man, like myself of peevishness and asperity, and changes my irascible temper, into one of good humour, and tranquility. Yes, yes,—there is no gain-saying it :—virtue produces the most delightful sensations, and makes us feel cheerful, contented, and happy ;—for it improves our tempers, — perfects our characters, — and reconciles us to ourselves, and to all the world.

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Correspondence: Dr J. A. Roberts, School of Health, Behavior and Society, Johns Hopkins University, 615 North Wolfe Street, Baltimore, MD 21205, USA. Tel: +1 410 516 7500. Fax: +1 410 516 7501. Email: jroberts@hsph.jhu.edu

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